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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Terry Goddard Urges U.S. Senate to Approve Federal Shield Law

(Phoenix, Ariz. – June 24, 2008) Attorney General Terry Goddard today expressed his support for the Free Flow of Information Act, the federal shield law, which would bring federal law in line with state laws in Arizona and 48 other states that protect reporters' confidential sources.

The bill, now awaiting a U.S. Senate vote, won approved in the U.S. House of Representatives by a vote of 398-21. Goddard joined 40 other state Attorneys General in a letter to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell in support of the measure.

"Many important news stories, including the Pentagon Papers, Watergate, Enron and Abu Ghraib, relied on confidential sources," Goddard said. "A federal shield law will help reporters do their jobs, but most importantly, it will help ensure that the public is well-informed."

The letter notes that the reporter's privilege to protect confidential sources "rests on a determination that an informed citizenry and the preservation of news information sources are vitally important to a free society."

The letter continues: "By exposing confidences protected under state law to discovery in federal courts, the lack of a corresponding federal reporters' privilege law frustrates the purpose of the state-recognized privileges and undercuts the benefit to the public that the states have sought to bestow through their shield laws."

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